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Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 02179 271655Z
ACTION SMI-01

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 OES-07 NAS-01 NSF-01 SSO-00
/021 W
----------005624 271713Z /43
O 271635Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 496

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL, TS
SUBJECT: TUNISIAN REQUEST TO DELAY START OF 1978
AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH
(ASOR) PUNIC EXCAVATIONS

REF: STATE 74421

1. AMBASSADOR MET MARCH 27 WITH ARCHEOLOGY DIRECTOR BESCHAOUCH AND WAS ASSURED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM IN STARTWNG DIG SEASON RIGHT AWAY, PROVIDED ASOR SENT REPRESENTATIVE TO TUNIS TO SIGN "NEW PROTOCOL" ALLOWING WORK TO BEGIN IN AREAS DESCRIBED PARA 4 REFTEL. BESCHAOUCH STATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT SIGNING OF AGREEMENT "A MERE FORMALITY" AND THAT HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD ASOR'S DESIRE TO GET TO WORK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HE EXPRESSED GREAT ENTHUSIASM FOR WORK DONE SO FAR BY ASOR TEAM.

2. PRIOR AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH BESCHAOUCH, WE DIS/ CUSSED SITUATION WITH SAM WOLFF BUT HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO INFORM HIM OF LATEST CONVERSATION, AS HE HAS LEFT FOR ITALY TO PICK UP ASOR VEHICLE. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, TALKED TO HITCHENER WHO SEES NO PROBLEM.

3. DESPITE OUR LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT HAS GONE ON
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BEFORE, WE BELIEVE BESCHAOUCH HAS CONSCIOUSLY MADE FIRM COMMITMENT TO AMBASSADOR. SUGGEST, THEREFORE, THAT ASOR REPRESENTATIVE (PRESUMABLY STAGER) PROCEED RIGHT AWAY TO TUNIS. WORK COULD BEGIN, ACCORDING BESCHAOUCH, AS SOON THEREAFTER AS TEAM COULD ARRIVE.
MULCAHY

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